

To: Szaro, Deb[Szaro.Deb@epa.gov]
From: Morning Consult
Sent: Tue 10/20/2015 12:22:35 PM
Subject: Morning Consult Energy, Presented by the Renewable Fuels Association: House Hearings This Week to Take Aim at EPA Rules; European Oil Companies Forging Ties with Iran

By [Dmitry Filipoff](#)

Today's Washington Brief

- House GOP lawmakers plan to scrutinize new climate rules put forth by the Obama administration during congressional hearings this week. The Science Committee is set to review the Environmental Protection Agency's new ozone rule and the Energy and Commerce Committee will review the legality of the emissions rule for power plants. ([The Hill](#))
- At least 16 states are planning to sue the federal government over the constitutionality of power plant rules imposed by the EPA's Clean Power Plan as soon as the rules are published in the Federal Register. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) said repeal legislation is being developed in both the House and Senate. ([Washington Examiner](#))
- Eighty-one companies have committed to reducing their carbon footprint, according to the White House, which said more pledges are expected ahead of December's highly anticipated climate talks in Paris. ([The New York Times](#))

Today's Business Brief

- European oil corporations dominated discussions at a conference aimed at giving businesses an opportunity to develop ties with Iran as sanctions on the nation's oil exports are slated to relax next year. ExxonMobil and Chevron were absent as European companies such as Royal Dutch Shell, BP and Total made competitive offers to Iran's Oil Ministry. ([The Wall Street Journal](#))
- The Natural Resources Defense Council praised the energy industry for fomenting a "tectonic shift" by increasing the proportion of energy supplied by renewable sources. ([Utility Dive](#))
- Martin Winterkorn, the former chief executive officer of Volkswagen, will also resign as the head of the holding company that owns the majority of shares in Volkswagen. His resignation will take effect at the end of October. ([The New York Times](#))

Today's Chart Review

Solar and Wind Catch Up With Coal, Natural Gas Across the Globe
Greentech

Mark Your Calendars (All Times Eastern)

Tuesday

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission conference and webcast @ 9 a.m.
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources hearing to consider pending nominations @ 10 a.m.
D.C. Bar panel discussion and webinar on sustainability in the District @ 12:15 p.m.
National Press Club panel discussion on urban sustainability and rural prosperity @ 2 p.m.
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee joint hearing on the 2015 Paris International Climate Negotiations @ 2:45 p.m.
Environmental Law Institute forum on the intersection between climate change and national security @ 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday

Joint meeting of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission @ 9 a.m.
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing on EPA regulatory impact analyses @ 10 a.m.

Thursday

Environmental Law Institute course and webcast on the Clean Air Act 2015 @ 7:30 a.m.
Brooking Institute hosts an event on the future of renewable energy @ 9 a.m.
Center for American Progress hosts talk with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy @ 10 a.m.
House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing on rural water systems @ 10 a.m.
American Wind Energy Association member briefing webinar @ 1 p.m.
House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing on the EPA's CO2 Regulations for new and existing power plants @ 2 p.m.

Friday

Environmental Law Institute course and webcast on the Clean Air Act 2015 @ 8 a.m.

General

Former Volkswagen Chief to Resign as Head of Holding Company **Jack Ewing, The New York Times**

Martin Winterkorn will resign as chief executive of the company that holds a majority of Volkswagen shares, the holding company said on Saturday, ending his formal influence over the carmaker he ran for eight years until an emissions cheating scandal led him to resign last month. Even after quitting as chief executive of the carmaker on Sept. 23, Mr. Winterkorn continued to hold the title of chief executive of Porsche Automobil Holding SE, which owns more than half of Volkswagen's voting shares.

Boehner faces treacherous path to the exits **Jake Sherman and John Bresnahan, Politico**

Boehner intends this week to set a date for the election to succeed him. But he doesn't know whether Ryan will run, and, if not, the Ohio Republican could be in a serious jam.

U.S. Index Futures Decline Amid IBM Earnings, Stimulus Concern **Alex Longley, Bloomberg News**

S&P 500 E-mini contracts expiring in December fell 0.2 percent to 2,023.25 at 7:21 a.m. in New York. Futures extended declines after a European Central Bank survey showed that credit standards on loans to companies eased for the sixth consecutive quarter — damping the case for any imminent increase in stimulus... Dow Jones Industrial Average contracts slipped 28 points, or 0.2 percent, to 17,089 today.

Oil & Natural Gas

European Oil Companies Steal a March on U.S. Peers in Iran **Benoit Faucon, The Wall Street Journal**

European oil companies are engaged in a fierce competition for the best oil and gas fields in Iran when Western sanctions are lifted, while American energy firms watch from the sidelines. The contest has been evident this week at the first major oil-and-gas conference in Iran since world powers agreed to lift sanctions in July in exchange for curbs on the Persian Gulf nation's nuclear program.

Oxy to exit North Dakota's oil fields in sale to private equity fund

Ernest Scheyder and Mike Stone, Reuters

Occidental Petroleum Corp, the fourth-largest U.S. oil producer, has agreed to sell all of its North Dakota shale oil acreage and assets to private equity fund Lime Rock Resources in a deal worth around \$500 million, according to sources familiar with the matter. The sale, which marks the first exit of this downturn by a major oil company from the Bakken shale formation, includes all of Oxy's roughly 300,000 acres in the state, including a 21,000 square-foot regional office built just three years ago.

Utilities & Infrastructure

As Conservation Cuts Electricity Use, Utilities Turn to Fees

Rebecca Smith, The Wall Street Journal

Electric utilities across the country are trying to change the way they charge customers, shifting more of their fixed costs to monthly fees, raising the hackles of consumer watchdogs and conservation advocates. Traditionally, charges for generating, transporting and maintaining the grid have been wrapped together into a monthly cost based on the amount of electricity consumers use each month.

Renewables

NRDC: US has reached 'historic levels' of renewables, poised for greater gains

Robert Walton, Utility Dive

The Natural Resources Defense Council is offering the United States energy industry a broad pat on the back, highlighting increasing amounts of renewable energy, efficiency and load management as a part of the "tectonic shift" in the country's energy sector. "The economic and environmental performance of America's energy systems has never been better, and the single most important contributor to these positive trends is energy efficiency, the largest and least expensive way to meet the nation's energy needs," Ralph Cavanagh, co-director of the NRDC energy program, said in a statement.

Hydropower backers push faster permitting

Devin Henry, The Hill

A hydropower industry group is encouraging Congress to move forward with bills to speed up the permitting process for new projects. The National Hydropower Association launched a website and public education campaign Monday to plug the industry, the role it can play in reducing carbon emissions and congressional measures designed to ease hydropower permitting in the future.

Study Sees Ecological Risks as Solar Expands

Bobby Magill, Climate Central

Solar power development is big business in sunny California, fueled by low solar panel prices and the drive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to tackle climate change. Some biologists, however, are growing concerned that the placement of new large-scale solar power plants in the Mojave Desert may harm the biological diversity found there.

Coal

U.S. exports its greenhouse-gas emissions — as coal. Profitable coal.

Joby Warrick, The Washington Post

The Obama administration is seeking to curb the United States' appetite for the basin's coal, which scientists say must remain mostly in the ground to prevent a disastrous warming of the planet. Yet each year, nearly half a billion tons of this U.S.-owned fuel are hauled from the region's vast strip mines and millions of tons are shipped overseas for other countries to burn.

Oakland Coal Terminal Becomes a Political Flash Point

Alejandro Lazo, The Wall Street Journal

A proposal that could make this city a gateway for Utah coal to be shipped overseas has become a political flash point and put pressure on Gov. Jerry Brown, a former mayor known for his warnings on climate change, to come out against the project. The proposed deal would grant four coal-producing counties in Utah rail access to a major commodities shipping terminal under development on city land, adjacent to the Port of Oakland, in exchange for a \$53 million investment.

Nuclear

Report: 11% of nukes could retire early, putting Clean Power Plan goals at risk

Robert Walton, Utility Dive

There are varying reasons plants may shutter early, before their licenses expire, but the predominate issue of late has been low gas prices. Entergy made its announcement last week — the plant was among the dozen “at risk” — and said both current and forecast power prices have fallen about \$10/MWh, which the company estimated as an annual loss of more than \$40 million in revenues for Pilgrim.

China to invest \$78 bn to build 110 nuclear power plants by 2030, will overtake US

FirstPost

China plans to build 110 nuclear power plants by 2030 with an investment of over \$78 billion overtaking the US which has 100 such plants amid criticism that Beijing is yet to implement enough measures to develop safety controls in existing projects. China will build six to eight nuclear power plants annually for the next five years and operate 110 plants by 2030 to meet the urgent need for clean energy, Beijing-based China Times quoted plan analysts as saying.

Climate

Week ahead: House GOP targets climate, ozone rules

Timothy Cama, The Hill

Republican lawmakers are slated to resume their sharp criticisms of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The House Science Committee is bringing in critics of the EPA's new ozone regulation made final this month, while the House Energy and Commerce Committee is planning a hearing on the legality of the climate rule for power plants.

States ready to sue as Obama climate plan nears final stage

John Siciliano, Washington Examiner

President Obama's centerpiece climate change regulations are expected to be published as soon as this week in the Federal Register, signaling the start of lawsuits and a Republican effort to scuttle the rules. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Justice Department told a federal court that the power plant rules, called the Clean Power Plan, would take months to be published in the Federal Register after they were finalized Aug. 3.

White House Emphasizes Companies' Commitment to Cutting Emissions

Gardiner Harris, The New York Times

The Obama administration announced Monday that 81 major companies have committed to large reductions in carbon emissions, part of a broad push by the White House to show progress ahead of international climate talks in Paris this year. The companies that have made the pledge include such iconic American brands as Levi Strauss & Co., McDonald's, I.B.M. and Procter & Gamble.

Study: Climate change adding billions to U.S. hurricane costs

Doyle Rice, USA Today

The economic cost of U.S. hurricane strikes has increased dramatically due to man-made climate change, says a study out Monday. "The rise in losses is consistent with an influence of global warming on the number and intensity of hurricanes, an influence which may have accounted for 2% to 12% of the U.S. hurricane losses in 2005," according to the study.

A Case Study of Climate Change vs. Human Activity

Sindya N. Bhanoo, The New York Times

Human activity has had at least as much effect as climate change on the survival of animals on the Bahamian island of Abaco, a new study suggests. Researchers looked at 10,000-year-old fossils found in an underwater cave on Abaco.

A Message from the Renewable Fuels Association:

Join the RFA in New Orleans for the 21st Annual NEC

The Renewable Fuels Association will hold its 21st annual National Ethanol Conference on Feb. 15–17, 2016 in New Orleans. The NEC is the premier conference for the ethanol industry, bringing together producers and industry experts to provide unmatched analysis and outlooks. John Hofmeister, the founder and CEO of Citizens for Affordable Energy, will deliver the keynote address. Register today at www.NationalEthanolConference.com.

Opinions, Editorials & Perspectives

Congress Should Extend Rail Safety Deadline With Safeguards

Editorial Board, The New York Times

Most of America's railroads are threatening to stop running freight and passenger trains as early as next month unless Congress gives them more time to install technology that can prevent deadly collisions and derailments. Such a shutdown would be devastating to the economy, which is why lawmakers should extend a year-end deadline for the new safety systems, but put in place safeguards to prevent any further delays.

How digital power plant tech can help utilities get the most from their assets

Herman K. Trabish, Utility Dive

Much of the talk last week at the Energy Storage North America conference centered on when storage could replace fossil fuel peaker plants, with keynoter James Avery of SDG&E declaring that a "future where there will be no gas turbines" could be possible in the coming years. That talk generated excitement for the industry at the industry expo in San Diego, but even the most optimistic analysts know that it won't happen immediately.

ExxonMobil's commitment to climate science

Ken Cohen, ExxonMobil Perspectives

They claim that evidence of our climate research was unearthed recently

by InsideClimate News and the Los Angeles Times after being suppressed as part of a conspiracy to deny the existence of climate change. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Can oil, gas companies really be climate leaders?

Roberto Bocca, USA Today

On Friday, CEOs of 10 leading oil companies came together to commit to tackle climate change, ahead of the Paris COP21 summit later this year. But can big oil really become a part of the climate solution?

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Research Reports, Issue Briefs & Case Studies

How Falling Gas Prices Fuel the Consumer

JP Morgan Chase & Co. Institute

The U.S. government projects that American households will save on average \$700 this year on gasoline, as the price of a gallon of gas has fallen by nearly \$1.50 from its peak of \$3.70 in April 2014 and is projected to remain low through 2015 (U.S. EIA 2015d). But who feels the biggest increase in spending power? How much of that extra money do consumers spend, and what do they spend it on?

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